



Thinking Out of The Box: Large Scale, Demographically Representative Approaches to Citizen Engagement

Susanna Haas Lyons
Program Associate, *AmericaSpeaks*

AmericaSpeaks Purpose

***Engage citizens in the most
important decisions that impact
their lives.***

Large Scale





Representative Participation

Decision-maker Involvement



Transparency

Preliminary Report

July 20, 2002 • Jacob Javits Center



More than 4,000 people from New York and the tri-state area gathered on July 20 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center to play a role in rebuilding Lower Manhattan. Over the course of the daylong forum, participants in "Listening to the City" deliberated options for redeveloping the World Trade Center site and considered the critical issues that must be addressed to help people rebuild their lives in the aftermath of September 11 and memorialize those who were lost.

The public conversation was attended by many of the decision-makers and leaders who will ultimately decide the future of Lower Manhattan, including officials from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the State of New York, and the New York City Mayor's Office and City Council. The results of the forum will be presented to these decision-makers to guide their work.

"Listening to the City" is a project of the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, a broad-based coalition of nearly 100 groups committed to devising strategies for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. The Civic Alliance was convened by the Regional Plan Association, in conjunction with New York University, New School University and the Pratt Institute. This 21st Century Town MeetingTM was designed and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks[®].

The Civic Alliance sought to represent the rich diversity of the metropolitan region at "Listening to the City." This goal was achieved more closely in some areas than in others. For example, 53% of the participants were female and 47% were male, while the region is 52% female and 47% male. In addition, 27% of the participants were 20 to 34 years old, compared to 22% for the region. People 65 and older made up 10% of the forum, close to the regional figure of 12%. On the other hand, while 20% of the region is African-American, the room was only 7% African-American. Similarly, participation was higher among people in the top income brackets and among those who live in Manhattan. The Civic Alliance will continue to try to ensure that all voices are proportionally represented at future activities.

Forum participants related to the events of 9/11 and the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan in a variety of capacities:

8.9% had a family member who was a 9/11 victim
19.7% are survivors of the events of 9/11
23.6% lived in Lower Manhattan
41.4% worked in Lower Manhattan
31.5% were at or near Ground Zero on 9/11
21.5% became displaced/unemployed as a result of 9/11
6.2% were rescue or recovery workers
71.1% attended primarily as interested citizens

Demographics

Participants in the forum came from all walks of life and represented the rich geographic, racial and income diversity of the metropolitan region. These figures are compared below to the official demographics of the region.

Gender	July 20	Region
Female	53%	52%
Male	47%	48%
Age		
19 and under	4%	22%
20-34	27%	22%
35-54	40%	36%
55-64	14%	9%
65 and better	10%	12%
Household Income		
Less than \$25,000	17%	26%
\$25,000 - 49,999	24%	25%
\$50,000 - 74,999	20%	18%
\$75,000 - 99,999	14%	12%
\$100,000 - 149,999	15%	11%
\$150,000 - 199,999	12%	8%

Race	July 20	Region
African-American	7%	20%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12%	9%
Caucasian	66%	64%
Native American	0%	<1%
Mixed Race	5%	2%
Other Race	9%	n/a
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	10%	20%
Non-Hispanic	90%	80%

Geography	July 20	Region
Manhattan	46%	47%
Brooklyn	18%	
Bronx	3%	
Queens	30%	
Statens Island	1%	23%
Elsewhere in NYS	6%	30%
New Jersey	10%	
Elsewhere	6%	

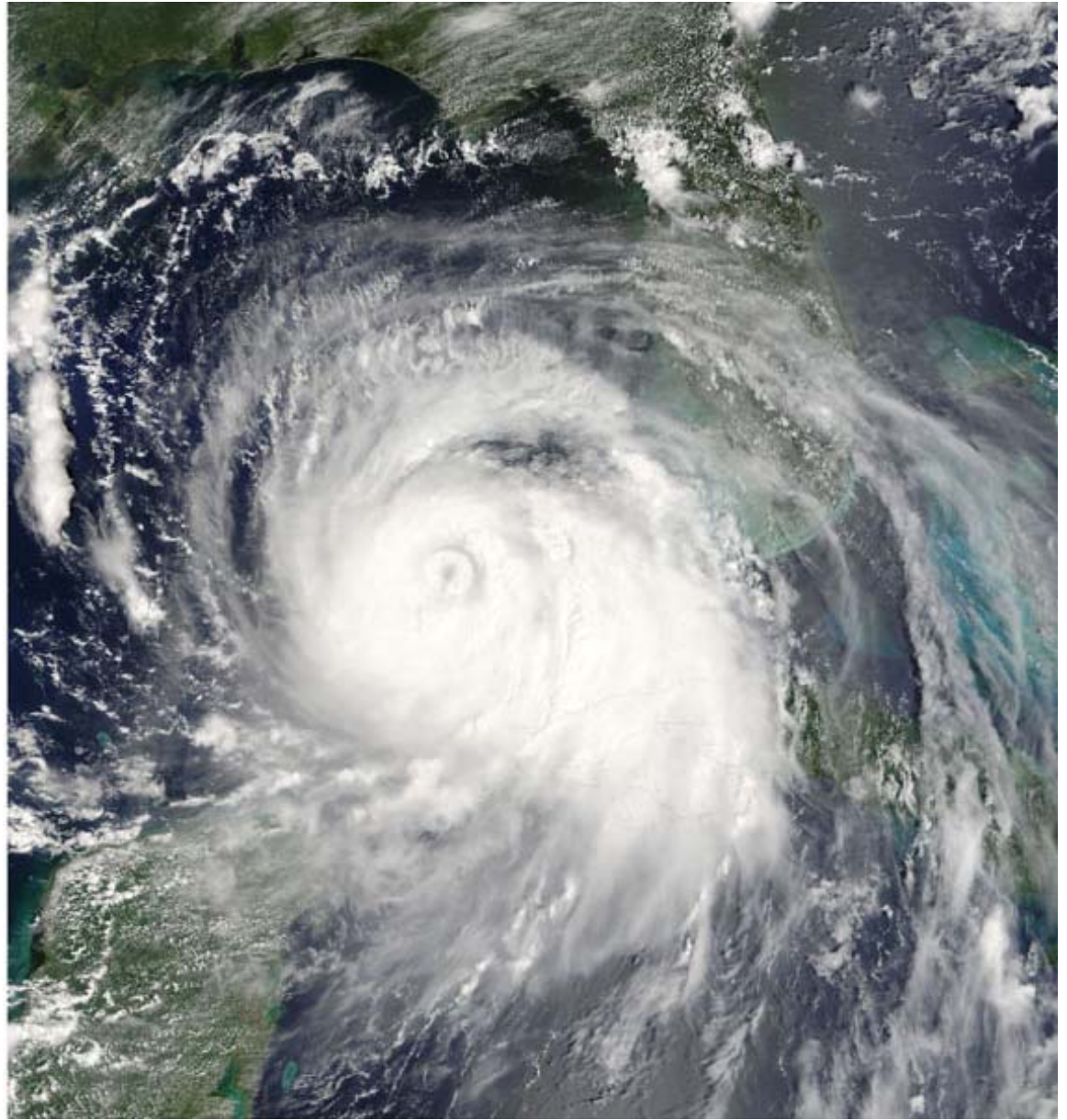


New Orleans



Hurricane Katrina

August 29, 2005





The Unified
New Orleans Plan

**Goal: Create a recovery plan for the city
that has strong public support**

December Community Congress, 5 Cities



Facilitated Deliberation

Linked Together By Satellite



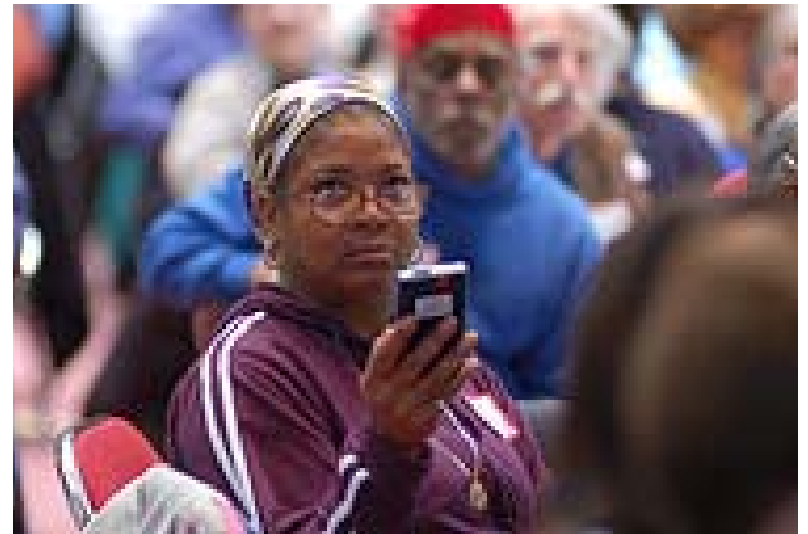
+ 16 Cities Linked by Webcast, 21 Total



Large Group Priority Setting



Wireless Computers



Polling Keypads

Reporting Back Themes in Real Time



The Theme Team



Video Projection

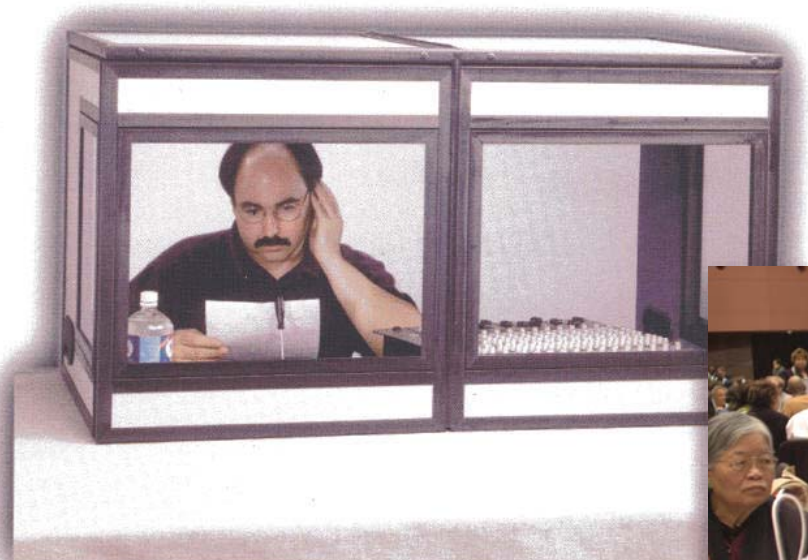


Who Participated?

- 2,500 People Across 21 Cities
- 25% w/ Annual Household Income Below \$20,000
- 64% African American



Translation





Creating an Inclusive Space

Services

- Child care
- Transportation Support
- Braille
- Large print
- Translation
- Interpretation

Holistic Program

- Greeters
- Musicians
- Visual artists
- Hip hop poets
- Stretch breaks
- Counselors
- Community Info

Recruitment

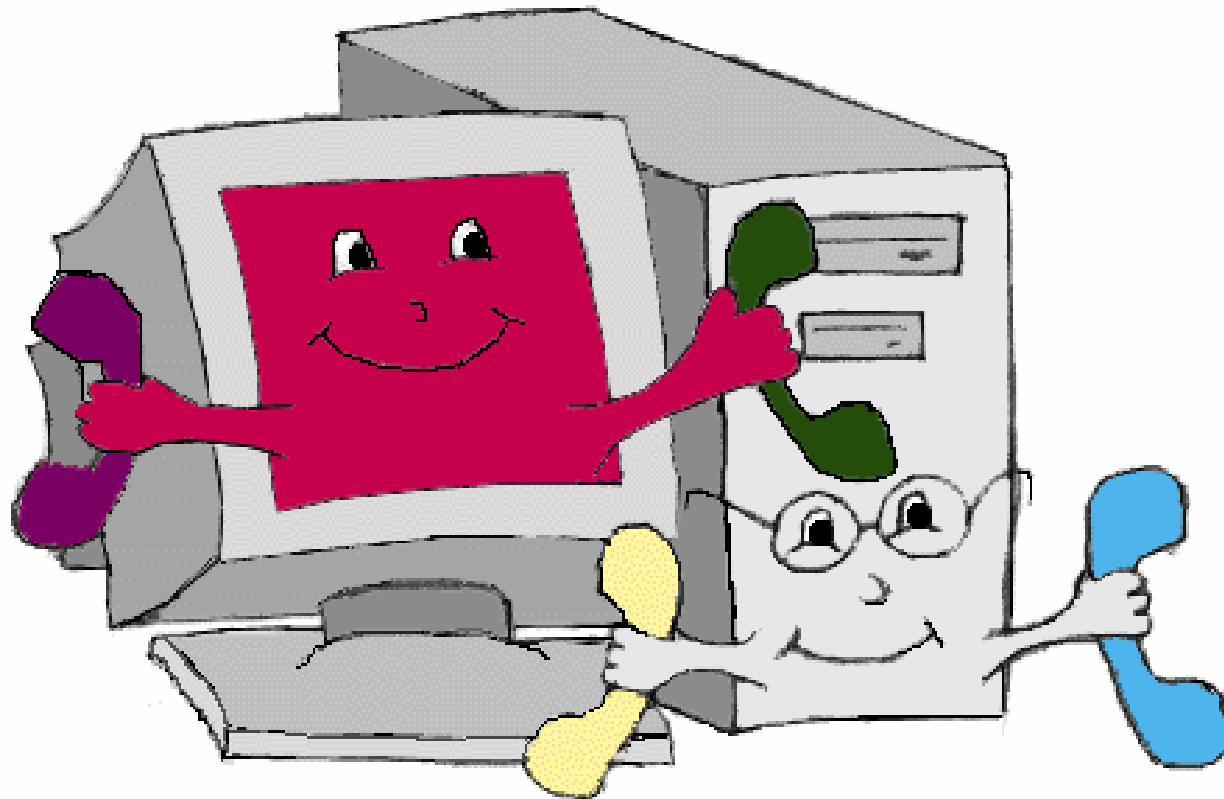


A BIT OF NEW ORLEANS COMES TO ATLANTA
ATLANTA FALCONS vs. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2006
FROM 12 NOON - 5PM
SOUTH BEACH BISTRO
5920 ROSWEL ROAD, SUITE A-120,
ATLANTA, GA 30328

Come watch the game on 10 big screens, there will be a half-time giveaway, featuring some of **New Orleans finest**; PJ's Coffee, Beignets Mix and Loretta's Praline's just to name a few. Also, directly following the game we will have live entertainment and conversation on how we can help with your return home to New Orleans. **ADMISSION IS FREE** with filled out registration form to the Community Congress.

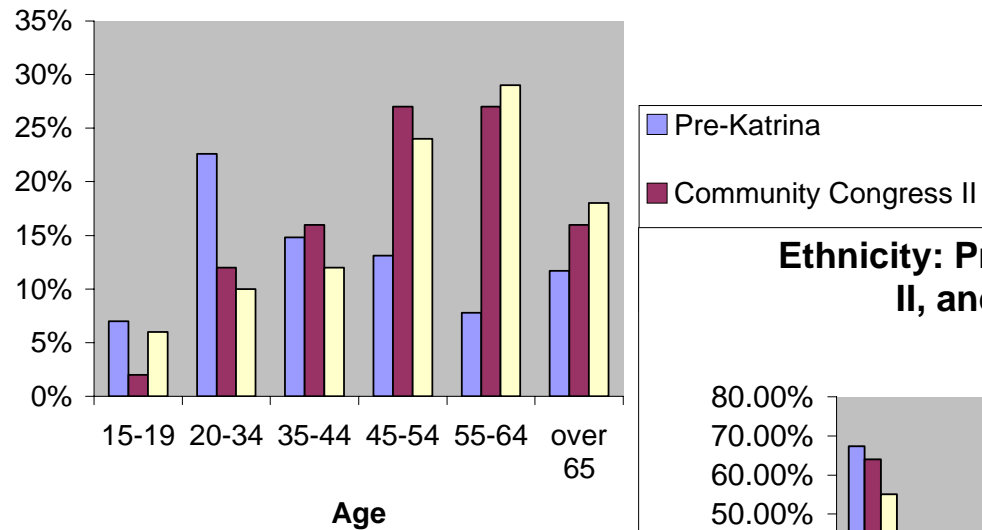


Robo-Calls & Emails

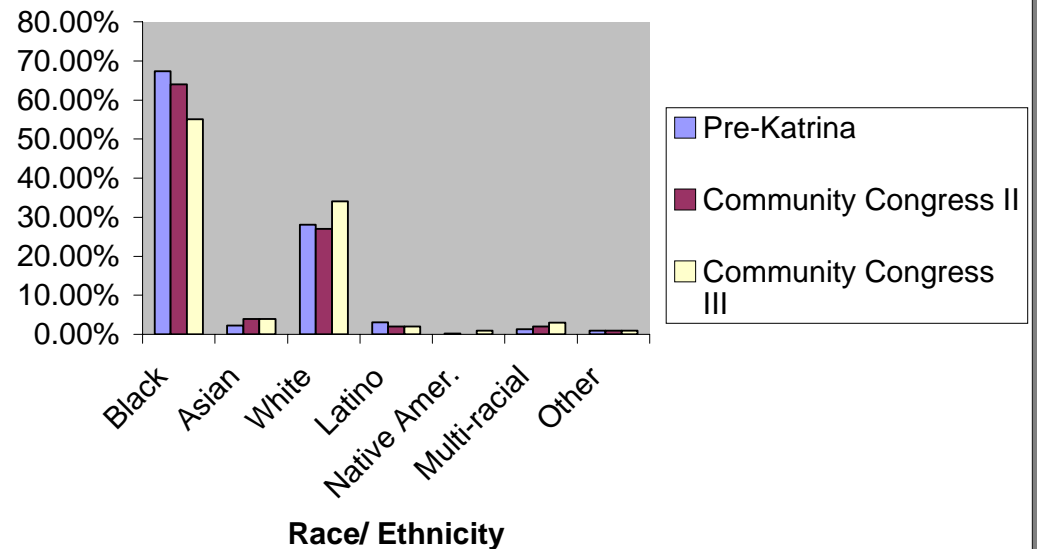


Online Recruitment Tracking

Age: Pre-Katrina, Community Congress II, and Community Congress III



Ethnicity: Pre Katrina, Community Congress II, and Community Congress III





What Participants Said

- **Safety from Future Flooding**
- **Empower to Rebuild Safe, Stable Neighborhoods**
- **An Opportunity for All to Return**
- **Sustainable, Equitable Public Services**
- **Schools that Meet the Needs of Communities**



Key Lessons for Engagement

- **Demographically representative participants assures credibility for outcomes**
- **Partnerships and planning key to engaging diverse citizens**
- **Convening at a large scale captures leadership and media attention**



Key Lessons for Engagement

- **Public is willing and able to tackle technical issues, tough trade-offs**
- **Participation develops buy-in and public constituency for implementation**
- **The right structure, process and content creates new experiences of citizenship**

Thank You!



Susanna Haas Lyons
shaaslyons@americaspeaks.org